



DEPARTMENT OF CORRECTIONS

ADMINISTRATION

3200 East Highway 34
c/o 500 East Capitol Avenue
Pierre, SD 57501-5070
Phone: (605) 773-3478
Fax: (605) 773-3194

May 22, 2001

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Contact: Michael Winder
(605) 773-3478

INMATES ASSIST CHILDREN'S ORGANIZATIONS

(Pierre) - Disadvantaged children across the country are receiving help from an unlikely source: state prison inmates.

South Dakota Department of Corrections (DOC) inmates are donating their hair to *Locks of Love*, a non-profit organization that provides hairpieces to financially disadvantaged children across the U.S. under age 18 who suffer from long-term medical hair loss.

A dozen inmates from the South Dakota State Penitentiary (SDSP) in Sioux Falls and Mike Durfee State Prison (MDSP) in Springfield have donated hair in the past few months. SDSP Inmate Aaron Johnson donated a 23-inch long ponytail today.

Most of the children helped by *Locks of Love* have lost their hair due to a medical condition called alopecia areata, which has no known cause or cure. The prostheses provided by *Locks of Love* help to restore their self-esteem and their confidence, enabling them to face the world and their peers.

The organization, which began in 1997, has helped hundreds of children since its inception.

DOC inmates are also collecting pop tabs to donate to Ronald McDonald's House Charities, which provide a "home-away-from-home" for the families of seriously ill children receiving treatment at nearby hospitals.